

# Sarcasm Types in Meghan Trainor's Song Entitled "Mother"

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## Sarcasm Types in Meghan Trainor's Song Entitled "Mother"

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**Abstract:** The research aim is to figure out types of sarcasm used in Meghan Trainor's song entitled "Mother". The descriptive qualitative method is used in this research. In analyzing the data, the researcher used theory of sarcasm types advocated by Elisabeth Camp. The results of research showed that there are two types of sarcasm used in Meghan Trainor's song entitled "Mother" namely, the illocutionary sarcasm (3 data found) and the lexical sarcasm (13 data found). The lexical sarcasm is the most used sarcasm type in the Meghan Trainor's song entitled "Mother". The lexical sarcasm used in that song indicates that the songwriter wanted to deliver her critics with vivid, strong and explicit messages to the audiences.

**Keywords:** Sarcasm, Elisabeth Camp, Song

## INTRODUCTION

Songs are widely known as a medium of an art expressed the true feeling of the songwriter. As McAnnaly (1883) said that the song is usually an outgrowth of the most intense form of feeling or passion... (p. 182). In expressing their feelings or ideas, songwriters usually use many of figurative languages. Dancygier & Sweetser (2014) stated that figurative language can heighten emotional involvement in the literary text; it is not only for aesthetic value. Today, we can find many of English songs use figurative languages. One of figurative languages mostly used in songs is sarcasm. If we see the definition of sarcasm, Colston (2015) said that A standard sarcastic verbal irony – saying something positive about something negative. The comment pretends to find the situation positive but ironically negates that stance to actually express negativity about it. Here also the pretended portion is in the language, and the honest feeling is in the emotion/prosody/etc... Sarcasm typically juxtaposes negative or undesirable actual outcomes with contradictory, usually positive or desirable expectations or preferences that are stated (e.g., saying "Nice" about something bad). This juxtaposition serves, among other things, to make the outcome look worse in comparison with the stated preference (and, indeed, relatively worse in comparison with the outcome had it been directly described negatively or not described at all) (see Colston 2002a; Colston & O'Brien 2000a, b). This shift in the perception of the actual event occurs because of a contrast effect between the stated and actual events. Such contrast effects are deeply embedded in our perceptual and even sensory systems. Through this definition, it clearly stated that sarcasm used to hide the intentional messages

that express negativity with positive outcomes. In addition, Tabacaru (2019) stated that sarcastic utterances...include some kind of criticism or negative emotion versus a certain target. From this, we can see that sarcasm is used to critics someone or something. This is the reason of the researcher took a research of Sarcasm types in Meghan Trainor's Song entitled "Mother". According to Meghan Trainor as said in her Instagram account @meghantrainor that the song lyrics used to critic "silly men" who always say that having a baby would end her career. Due to the reason, the researcher wants to analyzed sarcasm types in Meghan Trainor's Song entitled "Mother". The researcher wants to find out the types of sarcasm used in delivering the negative messages/critics in that song.

The song from Meghan Trainor entitled "Mother" released on 27 March, 2023. The song became a hit in several hours. After a month of the video released in YouTube, Meghan Trainor's video song entitled "Mother" got 20 million views. As a new song, it was really a big hit. The lyrics of the song is quite interesting to be analyzed and relevant with this research.

The researches about sarcasm and its types have been performed by several previous researches namely, Amelia Azis & Leni Marlina (2020) who did research entitled "" Analysis of Sarcasm Found in Keith Alberstadt's Comedy. Their research's aim is to explain sarcasm types used by Keith Alberstadt in his stand-up comedy. They used a theory advocated by Elizabeth Camp about types of sarcasm. The research results show that Keith Alberstadt uses four types of sarcasm with different presentation. Illocutionary sarcasm is the most dominant sarcasm type appeared.

The next previous researchers are Indah Rahma Fitri & Amril Amir (2020). They did a research about "Sarcasm in Deddy Corbuzier's Vlog". Their research purpose is to find sarcasm tendencies based on the theory of civility. The method used in their research is a qualitative method with a content analysis technique. Their research results show that there are 18 speech containing sarcasm 10 utterance in violation of the principle of courtesy Maxim praise and 8 utterance in violation of Maxim sympathy. There are 6 inappropriate connotations, 3 unpalatable utterance, 5 coarse connotations, and 4 loud connotations. There are 11 utterance that threaten positive face and 8 utterance that threaten negative advance.

Another previous researchers are Shaula Noorhayu Shelldyriani & Aris Munandar (2020). They conducted a research about "Sarcastic Expressions and the Influence of Social Distance and Relative Power in The TV Series Friends". Their research aims is to identify and classify the sarcastic expressions found in the TV Series Friends. They applied Camp (2011) theory to categorized sarcasm. Besides, their research also analyzed the influence of relative power and social distance to see how those two social variables influence the delivery of sarcastic expressions. The research results revealed that illocutionary sarcasm is the most frequently used and it is followed by propositional sarcasm. Both illocutionary and propositional sarcasm are mainly used when the social distance is negative where the interlocutors have no obligation to be polite because of their close intimacy. If the social distance is in a positive value, then the power variable helps to decide the sarcasm class used. In addition, a comprehensible context and common ground are important helping identify sarcastic expressions and its intention.

The previous researches above are quite different with the present research in the source of data. In the present research, the source of data used is a song entitled "Mother" from Meghan Trainor, which it is different from the previous researches above—the first research using Keith Alberstadt's stand-up comedy show, the second research using Deddy Corbuzier's Vlog, and the third research using The TV Series Friends.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a descriptive-qualitative method. It means, the researcher gathers the data by herself. Besides, data for the research are in words. According to Cresswell (2014, p.255), he stated that the researcher is the primary instrument in data collection rather than some inanimate mechanism... the data that emerge from a qualitative study are descriptive. It means data are reported in words.. or pictures rather than in numbers.....

The source of data for this research is song lyrics from Meghan Trainor's song entitled "Mother" released on 27 March, 2023. The song is part of the deluxe edition of her fifth major-label studio album, *Takin' It Back* (2022). The lyrics of the song is relevant with this research.

These are steps taken in collecting data. First, the researcher listened to the song entitled "Mother" and pay attention to the song lyrics. Second, the researcher wrote the lyrics of the song containing sarcasm in a list.

Third, the researcher listened and focused to the song lyrics again. Next, the researcher tried to recheck the data once more. The last, the researcher wrote all the data in the table.

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed and categorized the data by using theory advocated by Elisabeth Camp (2011) about types of sarcasm. Then, the researcher made a conclusion.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of analysis showed in the following table:

Table 1. Data Findings

No.	Data	Sarcasm types
1	I am your mother, You listen to me	Illocutionary
2	Stop all that mansplainin', No one's listening	Lexical
3	Tell me who gave you the permission to speak	Illocutionary
4	Mr. Big boy, Pulling up in your big toy	Lexical
5	Sayin' all that blah, blah, blah, Makin' all that big noise	Lexical
6	Cause you're so frustrated, emasculated	Lexical
7	'Cause you got your shit called out by this little lady	Lexical
8	Yet your opinions so strong, Even when you're wrong, Bet that feels like power to you	Lexical
9	Must've forgot who you're talkin' to	Illocutionary
10	You just a Bum-bum-bum (Bum-bum-bum), Bum-bum-bum-bum-bum-bum, bum, bum	Lexical
11	Y'all need a master class from my man, Learn how to satisfy like he can	Lexical
12	Ain't tryna control me and own me, Like an old man on CSPAN	Lexical
13	Bet you wish you could wife this, Stay mad, that's priceless	Lexical
14	You with your god complex, But you can't even make life, bitch	Lexical
15	Hey, Ladies shake your, Bum-bum-bum-bum-bum-bum, Bum-bum-bum-bum-bum-bum, bum bum	Lexical
16	Shake that bum, Bum-bum-bum-bum-bum-bum, Bum, bum, bum, Bum-bum-bum-bum-bum-bum	Lexical

From the data findings above, it is showed that from 16 data found, 3 data classified into Illocutionary Sarcasm and 13 data classified into Lexical Sarcasm. Lexical Sarcasm is the most used sarcasm type in the Meghan Trainor's song entitled "Mother". As Camp (2011) said that Lexical sarcasm used to delivers an inverted compositional value for a single expression or phrase..., lexical sarcasm most naturally targets expressions which denote the extreme end of a conventionally-associated, normatively-loaded. We can see here that the songwriter wanted to convey her critics with clear, strong and understandable messages to the audiences.

#### Illocutionary Sarcasm

Table 2. Illocutionary Sarcasm

Data No.	Data	Sarcasm types
1	I am your mother, You listen to me	Illocutionary

As we can see from the data above, it is counted as the illocutionary sarcasm. In here, the songwriter pretended as interlocuters' mother due to her evaluation toward the actual event happened. The clause "I am your mother"

is a high scale of politeness to attract attention of interlocuters. So, they can see the difference between the actual situation and the effect of their activity appeared toward the songwriter considered as a rude one. As Camp (2011) stated that illocutionary sarcasm expresses an attitude which is the opposite of one that a sincere utterance would have expressed. (pp. 2-3). Camp (2011) also stated that these utterances serve to express an evaluative attitude toward the actual circumstances Y which is the opposite of the attitude that they pretend to express toward X. For instance, in (19)—the sentence “Thanks for holding the door”—the speaker pretends to undertake an utterance which would be appropriate if the addressee had held the door, where door-holding ranks high on a scale of politeness. This pretense draws attention to the disparity between that evoked situation and the actual one, and thereby communicates the speaker’s evaluation of the addressee’s actual behavior as rude. (p.32)

Table 3. Illocutionary Sarcasm

Data No.	Data	Sarcasm types
3	Tell me who gave you the permission to speak	Illocutionary

Let’s see another data of the illocutionary sarcasm. In this sentence, the songwriter pretended by asking the interlocuters about who gave them permissions to speak. This is the songwriter’s evaluation toward the actual event happened. That question is a high scale of politeness to attract attention of interlocuters. So, they can see the difference between the actual situation and the effect of their activity appeared toward the songwriter considered as a rude one. As Camp (2011) stated that illocutionary sarcasm expresses an attitude which is the opposite of one that a sincere utterance would have expressed. (pp. 2-3). Camp (2011) also stated that these utterances serve to express an evaluative attitude toward the actual circumstances Y which is the opposite of the attitude that they pretend to express toward X. For instance, in (19)—the sentence “Thanks for holding the door”—the speaker pretends to undertake an utterance which would be appropriate if the addressee had held the door, where door-holding ranks high on a scale of politeness. This pretense draws attention to the disparity between that evoked situation and the actual one, and thereby communicates the speaker’s evaluation of the addressee’s actual behavior as rude. (p.32)

Table 4. Illocutionary Sarcasm

Data No.	Data	Sarcasm types
9	Must've forgot who you're talkin' to	Illocutionary

The sentence above is the other data of the illocutionary sarcasm. In this sentence, the songwriter pretended by reminding the interlocuters that they forgot with whom they talked to. This is the songwriter’s evaluation toward the actual event happened. That question is a high scale of politeness to attract attention of interlocuters. So, they can see the difference between the actual situation and the effect of their activity appeared toward the songwriter considered as a rude one. As Camp (2011) stated that illocutionary sarcasm expresses an attitude which is the opposite of one that a sincere utterance would have expressed. (pp. 2-3). Camp (2011) also stated that these utterances serve to express an evaluative attitude toward the actual circumstances Y which is the opposite of the attitude that they pretend to express toward X. For instance, in (19)—the sentence “Thanks for holding the door”—the speaker pretends to undertake an utterance which would be appropriate if the addressee had held the door, where door-holding ranks high on a scale of politeness. This pretense draws attention to the disparity between that evoked situation and the actual one, and thereby communicates the speaker’s evaluation of the addressee’s actual behavior as rude. (p.32)

Lexical Sarcasm

Table 5. Lexical Sarcasm

Data No.	Data	Sarcasm types
2	Stop all that mansplainin', No one's listening	Lexical

In the sentence above, we can see lexical sarcasm appeared. There is an extreme evaluation happened and the sarcastic expression stated clearly in the end of the sentence. Let’s see the beginning of the sentence “Stop all that mansplainin’...” in that clause, the songwriter tried to give a positive input to the interlocuters. But, in the ending “...No one's listening” we can see, that the sarcastic expressions or negative messages clearly stated to



the interlocuters. We can see obviously sarcastic expressions or negative messages of the songwriter in that sentence. If we see Camp (2011) who said that Lexical sarcasm delivers an inverted compositional value for a single expression or phrase (pp.2-3). Moreover, Camp (2011) said that lexical sarcasm displays an even tighter connection to an evoked evaluative scale than propositional sarcasm. Where the evaluative scale in propositional sarcasm might be merely pragmatically evoked, lexical sarcasm most naturally targets expressions which denote the extreme end of a conventionally-associated, normatively-loaded scale...so that the sarcastic inversion contributes a value at the scale's extreme other end. Often, the targeted expression denotes a positive value, but it can also be negative.. (pp. 25)

Table 6. Lexical Sarcasm

Data No.	Data	Sarcasm types
4	Mr. Big boy, Pulling up in your big toy	Lexical

In here, we clearly see the lexical sarcasm appeared. There is an extreme evaluation happened and the sarcastic expression stated obviously in the end of the sentence. In the beginning of the sentence "Mr. Big boy ..." in that clause, the songwriter tried to give a positive input to the interlocuters. But, in the ending "...Pulling up in your big toy" we can see, that the sarcastic expressions or negative messages stated to the interlocuters here. We can see obviously sarcastic expressions or negative messages of the songwriter in that sentence. If we see Camp (2011) who said that Lexical sarcasm delivers an inverted compositional value for a single expression or phrase (pp.2-3). Moreover, Camp (2011) said that lexical sarcasm displays an even tighter connection to an evoked evaluative scale than propositional sarcasm. Where the evaluative scale in propositional sarcasm might be merely pragmatically evoked, lexical sarcasm most naturally targets expressions which denote the extreme end of a conventionally-associated, normatively-loaded scale...so that the sarcastic inversion contributes a value at the scale's extreme other end. Often, the targeted expression denotes a positive value, but it can also be negative.. (pp. 25).

Table 7. Lexical Sarcasm

Data No.	Data	Sarcasm types
5	Sayin' all that blah, blah, blah, Makin' all that big noise	Lexical

Let's see another data about the lexical sarcasm. In the beginning of the sentence above, we can see the sarcastic expressions or negative messages stated to the interlocuters "Sayin' all that blah, blah, blah..". Then, in the ending, the songwriter seemed to give a positive input to the interlocuters "...Makin' all that big noise". There is an extreme evaluation happened and the sarcastic expressions stated obviously in the other side of the sentence. Besides, we can see easily sarcastic expressions or negative messages of the songwriter in that sentence and sure that characteristic showed the sentence above counted as the lexical sarcasm. If we see Camp (2011) who said that Lexical sarcasm delivers an inverted compositional value for a single expression or phrase (pp.2-3). Moreover, Camp (2011) said that lexical sarcasm displays an even tighter connection to an evoked evaluative scale than propositional sarcasm. Where the evaluative scale in propositional sarcasm might be merely pragmatically evoked, lexical sarcasm most naturally targets expressions which denote the extreme end of a conventionally-associated, normatively-loaded scale...so that the sarcastic inversion contributes a value at the scale's extreme other end. Often, the targeted expression denotes a positive value, but it can also be negative.. (pp. 25).

### CONCLUSION

The results of the research are that from 16 data obtained in Meghan Trainor's song entitled "Mother", there are two types of sarcasm used. The illocutionary sarcasm (3 data found) and the lexical sarcasm (13 data found). Lexical Sarcasm is the most used sarcasm type in the Meghan Trainor's song entitled "Mother". As Camp (2011) said that Lexical sarcasm used to delivers an inverted compositional value for a single expression or phrase..., lexical sarcasm most naturally targets expressions which denote the extreme end of a conventionally-associated, normatively-loaded. We can see here that the songwriter wanted to convey her critics with clear, strong and understandable messages to the audiences.

For the next researcher, the present researcher suggests to do a research about sarcasm types in the different source of data such as in a debate show on TV or people's comments in the celebrity's social media. It will help other researchers and the readers gaining a deep knowledge about sarcasm types used in different area.

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